

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

SYSTEM OF SURGERY. Edited by FREDERIC S. DENNIS, M.D., Assisted by JOHN S. BILLINGS, M.D., Vol. II. Minor Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Military Surgery, Diseases of the Bones, Orthopaedic Surgery, Aneurism, Surgery of the Arteries and Veins, Surgery of the Lymphatic System, Diseases and Injuries of the Head, the Surgery of the Spine, Surgery of the Nerves. Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Co., 1895.

The high standard of the first volume of this work is maintained in this, the second. The chapters are full, well written, and well illustrated.

A perusal of the section on bandaging will well repay the surgeon whose reading is more in the line of major work ; for it is a matter of fact that, as a rule, the man who administers the anæsthetic is more expert in the art of bandaging than the surgeon who performs the operation.

This chapter is full of practical hints, even to informing the surgeon of the best method of removing plaster of Paris from the hands. Poultices, counter-irritation, cupping, and venesection are dealt with under the head of minor surgery. Here we also find remarks on artificial respiration, aspiration, hypodermic injections, massage, enemata, and vaccination,—all, indeed, surgical subjects, but usually found wanting in books on surgery. We cannot commend the author for illustrating such unused contrivances as the porte-moxa and the old-fashioned cautery-irons ; nor do we think that so much space need have been given to illustrating and describing the rapidly-becoming obsolete methods of direct and indirect transfusion of blood. For irrigating the bladder, “a syringe,

or, better, a rubber bulb, holding about a pint," is recommended, no mention being made of the more safe and convenient douche-bag.

In this chapter are also treated the subjects of sutures and the treatment of haemorrhage.

The chapter on plastic surgery is a most admirable one. First are dealt with the general principles and methods of plastic surgery. The illustrations are numerous; and, as is not always the case in medical works, each picture which the author has introduced illustrates definitely and positively the feature which it is intended to show. After dealing with the general principles of plastic work, special plastic surgery is taken up. The new knowledge on the subject of bone-grafting is found in this chapter; and the author's own clever device for the treatment of webbed fingers.

A masterly and exceedingly interesting essay is that on military surgery. This chapter will not only hold the attention of surgeons, but will appeal to all who are interested in military organization. Its author deserves the highest praise.

It would be difficult to crowd into the limited space given to that subject more information concerning the diseases of bone than its author has succeeded in doing. Fifty-six pages is a small space for an author, so capable of writing fully and elaborately, in which to condense this important subject.

The same may be said of the hundred pages on orthopaedic surgery. It seems hardly fair to ask an American author to cover this broad subject in so small a space, when Hoffa spreads his knowledge of the same subject on 750 pages. We would criticise the author for making a plea for the elimination from scientific nomenclature of such terms as "Pott's disease," when, with his plea still glaring in our eyes, we find him repeatedly employing these very objectionable terms further on in the chapter. It is not true that the operations of Hoffa and Lorenz for congenital dislocation of the hip "differ very little in their essential features," and that "the structures to be divided are about the same."

The chapter on aneurism is good. Special aneurisms are written of by Dr. Percival R. Bolton, whose name does not appear in the list of authors. This chapter contains analyses of cases and much statistical information.

In the section on the surgery of the arteries and veins quite a full list of the methods of treating varicose veins is given, with the statement that "the list is sufficiently complete to illustrate the principles upon which all the operations are based." Nevertheless, the operation of ligation or compression of the saphenous vein is not included in the list, which method is based upon the hydrostatic principle of removing the pressure from the diseased veins, and has received much attention of late, and its value has been practically demonstrated upon a large number of cases.

The chapter on the surgery of the lymphatic system is worthy of especial note. The diagrams of the lymphatic system, showing areas drained by the various channels, are new and instructive. Scrofula is disposed of in masterly style. The section on filariasis and the diseases dependent thereon is clear and interesting. The author regards elephantiasis as due to the filaria.

The diseases and injuries of the head are well classified. The chapter begins with diseases of the scalp; then tumors of the soft coverings, bone, and brain are taken up. Such rare conditions as aplasia and imperfect osteogenesis of the bones of the skull are beautifully illustrated. Injuries to the head previous to birth are considered. The author states his indebtedness to MacEwen's work on "Infectious Diseases of the Brain," for the points on the surgical anatomy of the skull.

Fractures of the skull and brain injuries are broadly discussed. Attention is called to the diagnostic value of percussion in locating abscesses of the brain.

There is not as much information as we should expect on the subject of cerebral localization. In speaking of an illustrative case of abscess of the brain, the author says, "A middle-aged man, whose boy had been a patient of mine, suddenly developed furious brain

symptoms," etc. We fail to discover that the boy had anything more to do with the case than the man's cow had.

This section on the surgery of the head is one of the fullest and best in the book.

The chapter on the surgery of the spine is full of practical ideas, and was written by a man of much experience and learning.

The volume ends with a well-written chapter on the surgery of the nerves.

This work is rich in references. Naturally, authors refer most frequently to the literature of their own country, but in no medical works do we find such complete references as in those by American authors. No scientific literature is richer than that of the Germans; but, because of the fact that their writers often assume that there is little of value or importance outside of their language, they are often guilty of gross inaccuracies. This is especially true in their compilations of statistics.

This work of Dennis has been characterized so far by a fulness, an honesty, and frankness of statement which must command the confidence of surgeons everywhere.

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